

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the

application:

Enter. Rule 1.312

/JFP/

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Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently amended) A valve mechanism to be attached to a tightly closed bag for holding its contents by keeping the contents from the ambient air and adapted to open for evacuating air from the tightly closed bag and close for stopping such evacuation, the valve mechanism comprising:

a suction connector to be mounted at a peripheral edge thereof on the outer surface of a tightly closed bag within a hole formed in the bag, the peripheral edge having a thickness, the suction connector having a vent formed in its center and having a shape which does not project relative to the peripheral edge on a side of the suction connector facing outside the tightly closed bag more than the thickness of the peripheral edge;

a valve base to be mounted on the inner surface of the tightly closed bag and having a recessed shape in cross-section, a suction opening formed in its center as viewed in top plan, and an edge portion adapted to be joined to the suction connector with the tightly closed bag held therebetween; and

a valve body facing the suction opening within the valve base and adapted to open the suction opening upon suction through the vent and close it upon stoppage of the suction, wherein the valve body is hinged at one end so as to open and close at another end opposite diametrically of the suction opening, and the suction connector is provided with a leg portion which presses against the valve body to thereby lock the valve body over the suction opening.

6. **(Previously presented)** The valve mechanism according to claim 5, wherein the valve base has a ring member of an elastic material attached integrally to it, and the suction connector has an annular cavity formed in its portion corresponding in position to the ring member on the valve base.

7. **(Previously presented)** The valve mechanism according to claim 5, wherein the valve base has ridges formed on the opposite side thereof from the suction connector and extending from a periphery of the suction opening.

8. **(Previously presented)** The valve mechanism according to claim 6, wherein the valve base has ridges formed on the opposite side thereof from the suction connector and extending from a periphery of the suction opening.

9. **(Previously presented)** The valve mechanism according to claim 5, wherein the suction connector further comprises load restraining means provided around its vent for restraining the load of a suction device used for discharging air from the tightly closed bag.

10. **(Previously presented)** The valve mechanism according to claim 6, wherein the suction connector further comprises load restraining means provided around its vent for restraining the load of a suction device used for discharging air from the tightly closed bag.

11. **(Previously presented)** The valve mechanism according to claim 7, wherein the suction connector further comprises load restraining means provided around its vent for restraining the load of a suction device used for discharging air from the tightly closed bag.

12. **(Previously presented)** The valve mechanism according to claim 8, wherein the suction connector further comprises load restraining means provided around its vent for restraining the load of a suction device used for discharging air from the tightly closed bag.

13. **(Previously presented)** The valve mechanism according to claim 6, wherein the ring member is dimensioned to fit into the annular cavity with a portion of the bag around the periphery of an opening in one wall retained in air-tight relation therebetween.

14. **(Previously presented)** The valve mechanism according to claim 8, wherein the ring member is dimensioned to fit into an annular cavity with a portion of the bag around the periphery of an opening in one wall retained in air-tight relation.